

REMARKS

Prior to addressing the Office Action, Applicants memorialize a telephonic discussion between Manish B. Vyas and Examiner Slack that occurred on August 23, 2004. Applicants thank the Examiner and for the teleconference. During this teleconference, the Examiner restricted the claims as follows:

Group I: Claims 1-28, drawn to a floor system, classified in class 52, subclass 591.1; and

Group II: Claims 29-36, drawn to a method of manufacturing a floor panel, classified in class 156, subclass 307.5.

Although Applicants do not agree with the Examiner's restriction, Manish B. Vyas, Applicants' representative and the undersigned, provisionally elected to prosecute claims 1-28 which is Group I. This provisional election is affirmed by the present Response.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-10 and 12-15, withdrew from consideration claims 29-36, allowed claims 16-28, and objected to claim 11 for containing allowable subject matter but depending from a rejected base claim. Applicants thank the Examiner for noting the allowable subject matter in the instant claims. By the present Response, Applicants have amended claim 1, canceled claims 11 and 29-36 without prejudice, and added new claims 37-43. With respect to the new and amended claims, Applicants respectfully assert that no new matter has been added. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 1-10, 12-28 and 37-43 will be pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Rejections Under Sections 102 and 103.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by the Martensson et al. reference (U.S. Patent 6,588,166), rejected claims 1, 7 and 13-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by the Palmblad et al. reference (U.S. Patent App. No. 2003/0141004), and rejected claims 1, 6 and 7 under

35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by the Pervan et al. reference (U.S. Patent App. No. 2003/0024199). Additionally, the Examiner rejected claims 4, 5 and 12 under 35. U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious in view of the Martensson et al. reference and the Knauseder reference (U.S. Patent App. No. 2002/0148551). Applicants, however, respectfully assert that the present claims are patentable over the cited references, whether the references are taken alone or in combination.

By the present Response, Applicants have incorporated the subject matter indicated as allowable by the Examiner into amended independent claim 1. Additionally, Applicants respectfully assert that new claims 37-43 also recite subject matter that the Examiner has indicated as being allowable. With this in mind, Applicants respectfully request allowance of all pending claims, i.e., claims 1-10, 12-28 and 37-43.

Conclusion

In view of the remarks and amendments set forth above, Applicants respectfully request allowance of all pending claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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